



State of Wisconsin  
Department of Public Instruction  
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

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\*\*\* GUEST EDITORIAL \*\*\*

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## Exciting times for arts education

*By State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster*

These are exciting times for arts education. Lieutenant Governor Barbara Lawton and I announced the formation of an arts task force that will strengthen arts education and ensure Wisconsin's leadership in the emerging creative economy.

The Wisconsin Task Force on Arts and Creativity in Education is being formed at a time when education is facing significant challenges and unique opportunities. Federal testing requirements and budget constraints have pressured Wisconsin public school districts to cut art and music programs at the same time that business and industry are calling for students with the knowledge and skill to be innovative and creative. Robust arts education programs in our schools provide our students the opportunity to practice creative problem solving, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication skills; the very attributes business and industry says young people will need to be successful in the work force of the future.

The task force will be made up of those who work and teach in the arts as well as business and government leaders. It will reach out to the larger community to address how to make the arts a foundation for a quality education. Task force members will examine state policies and local practices to determine their impact on access to and equity in arts education opportunities in Wisconsin.

Families, community-based organizations, schools, and arts organizations can work together to engage youth in the arts. Students who are engaged in the arts and have the opportunity to develop their own creativity learn about themselves and gain skills that enhance all aspects of their lives. Education in the arts is not a luxury; it is essential.

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*Elizabeth Burmaster is the elected state superintendent of public instruction.*

**NOTES:** A high-resolution photo of the state superintendent is available on the Department of Public Instruction "Media Contacts and Resources" webpage at <http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/vm-media.html>. This editorial is available electronically at [http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/dpi2008\\_59.pdf](http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/dpi2008_59.pdf).

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